



For immediate release

December 18, 2020

Contact: Damian Boudreau, Communications Specialist, 406-457-8908

Lewis and Clark County Board of Health Passes COVID-19 Emergency Rules and Regulations

Helena – The Lewis and Clark County Board of Health passed emergency rules and regulations yesterday meant to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the county. These emergency rules include the requiring of face coverings, restrictions on events, and other, location-specific requirements.

The regulations rely on a set of triggering criteria before they are enacted, including factoring in stresses on the health care system, testing capacities, and community compliance. Each of the criteria used to trigger the emergency regulations center on data taken from the health department's Local COVID-19 Decision Making Dashboard.

LCPH Health Officer Drenda Niemann said health department staff understand times are difficult for many residents in the county, but the department also has a duty to protect citizens from disease. The emergency rules and regulations passed by the board of health are part of that protection.

"We care deeply about this community, and we understand the economic and personal impacts the current mandates and rules are having," Niemann said. "However, public health's most important task is to protect people from disease. We must have access to the tools necessary to accomplish that task."

It can be difficult for people in the community to see the value of the mandates and rules already in place in the state. However, Niemann asserts, thousands of infections and many lives have been saved due to the state's current masking guidelines and caps on event capacities.

COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Also, be aware of emergency warning signs of severe COVID-19 disease. Individuals showing any of the following signs or symptoms should seek emergency medical care immediately: trouble breathing, persistent pressure or pain in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face coloring.

For the most current available data on local COVID-19 cases, view the Local COVID-19 Decision Making Dashboard at www.lccountymt.gov/health/covid-19/local-covid-19-decision-making-dashboard.html.

Preventing and controlling local COVID-19 is dependent on personal responsibility and individual choices that residents of our county can make to protect our community. Lewis and Clark Public Health continues to urge people to do the right thing to protect our community, practice what has been learned over the last few

months, such as physical distancing, wearing a face covering, avoiding large gatherings, washing hands, and sanitizing surfaces to protect ourselves and others.

If you have questions, please call Lewis and Clark Public Health at 457-8900.

###